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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [OPDC](#) [GG](#) [RS](#)  
SUBJECT: TFGG01: MEDVEDEV WILL RECOGNIZE SOUTH OSSETIAN,  
ABKHAZ INDEPENDENCE

Classified By: DCM Eric Rubin for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C/NF) On August 26 at 12:00 p.m. local time, Russian DFM Grigoriy Karasin handed DCM a letter from President Medvedev to President Bush announcing Medvedev's intention to sign an order on August 26 recognizing the independence of the Georgian breakaway regions South Ossetia and Abkhazia. A full non-official translation of the three-page letter will be transmitted septel, along with Embassy's initial thoughts on the way forward.

¶2. (C/NF) In his letter, President Medvedev calls this decision to recognize the regions' independence the "difficult, but only decision possible in these difficult conditions." He accuses Georgian President Saakashvili of launching a "blitzkrieg" against South Ossetia, and describes the Russian view of events, underlining Russia's efforts to systematically conduct a process of negotiations.

¶3. (C/NF) In his letter, Medvedev also gives as reasons for his decision: the regions' repeated request for recognition of their independence, in particular de facto presidents' Bagapsh and Kokoity's most recent appeal; the August 25 decisions of the Federation Council and Duma to request the GOR's recognition of South Ossetian and Abkhaz independence; and the fact that the majority of Russian citizens supports the recognition.

¶4. (C/NF) Medvedev also claims that his decision conforms with the 1970 UN declaration on principles of international rights, the Helsinki Final Act, and other fundamental international documents.

¶5. (C/NF) In closing, Medvedev recognizes the U.S. administration's efforts to influence Saakashvili and avert military activity, but concludes that these efforts were unfortunately insufficient. He expresses hope that the U.S. will take measures to discourage Saakashvili's anti-democratic and militaristic instincts.  
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